



Balancing Your College Schedule

Attending classes, studying, working a part-time job, participating in extracurricular activities, and finding time for your friends, family and yourself can be a hard schedule for college students to balance. This is why it is crucial for you to achieve time management skills early so you will not become too stressed out once you get more involved in your school activities.

Poor time management is the most common reason for poor academic performance in college. In order to be the most successful college student you can be, adapt the following time management tips to your lifestyle and be prepared for a more organized life.

1. Set Goals. Determine exactly what you want to accomplish. This may be what you want to accomplish in a day, a week, a semester, or even longer. What are your academic goals? Maybe you want to have your Psychology paper finished by the end of the week so you can enjoy your weekend. Maybe you have a goal of going to graduate school, but you must first perform well in all your undergrad classes. What are your extra-curricular goals? Do you want to join a campus club or the SGA? How much time are you willing to commit to your extra-curricular activities? Do you have any personal goals? Maybe you want to expand your social circle or start exercising. By setting goals, you will be more inclined to follow through with them and accomplish your tasks.

2. Prioritize. Once you know what needs to be accomplished, you must prioritize your tasks. This means figuring out which tasks are most important and which ones can be put on hold. Be sure to stay focused on the most important task before you move on to the next ones. To help you better prioritize your tasks, you may want to number them in order of importance. For instance, if you have a paper that is due in a week and a small group project that is due in a month, it makes more sense to put your paper at the top of your priority list followed by your group project.

3. Organize. Being organized will help you achieve your goals in a timely manner. You need to organize your tasks so you will know what needs to be accomplished and when they need to be accomplished. Create a weekly calendar that includes your schedule for classes, study time, social events, club meetings, exercise time, and any other time necessary to achieve your goals. Also, be sure to include assignment due dates in this calendar so you don't miss a deadline. Abide by this calendar every week so you will develop a regular routine while learning how to manage your time.

4. Avoid Procrastination. Procrastination is the main downfall of achieving time management skills. If you plan on doing an activity, stick to your schedule; don't put it off until tomorrow. Doing so will only cause stress over trying to complete the task in time. By setting predetermined goals and prioritizing them, you will be less inclined to procrastinate.

5. Utilize Spare Minutes. Do you ever find yourself aimlessly waiting on an activity to start or on someone to meet you? If so, you need to start using those extra minutes wisely. For instance, if you find yourself waiting on a class to start with nothing to do, consider starting on those reading assignments from your last class or begin thinking about a topic for your Philosophy paper. By accomplishing small tasks while you're waiting, you will find that you have extra time to complete those larger tasks when you actually start on them.

6. Know When You're Most Productive. Everyone has a time period during the day when they are most productive. Maybe you get more tasks accomplished in the morning than the evening or vice versa. Use the times when you have the most energy to accomplish the tasks that are more demanding, such as schoolwork. Use the times when you have less energy to work on tasks that are less challenging, such as running errands. You will notice that you'll get more tasks accomplished throughout the day by implementing this strategy into your time management plan.

We all probably wish that there were more hours in a day, but since that is virtually impossible, we must make the best use of the hours that we do have. By utilizing the above-mentioned steps, you will be on your way to achieving better time management skills and becoming an all-around better college student.